

**BLOSSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 13, 2020**

Meeting was called to Order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance: President Jolene Hall, Vice- President Jill Nickerson, Pro-Temp Tonya McNamara, Council Members Jerome Ogden, Henry Bartlett, Tim Martin, James Rakoski, Mayor, Shane Nickerson, Borough Solicitor, Patrick Barrett (by teleconference), Police Chief, Josh McCurdy Borough Manager, George D. Lloyd and Borough Secretary, Cheryl Bubacz.

Guests: Natalie Kennedy from Wellsboro Gazette, Heather Dietrick, Misty Jo and Jeff Osborne (all by teleconference) and Josh Jones, present at meeting.

Guests: Misty Jo Osborne: What can Island Park be used for now that we are in the Yellow Phase? Will the Pool be able to open? Mayor Nickerson said that he would address both items in his report.

Minutes, Treasurer's Report, Bills, Police Report and Borough Manager's Report Through the Consent Agenda, the Minutes of the April 8, 2020 meeting were accepted as presented, Treasurer's Report accepted, subject to Audit, Bills to be paid, and the Police Report and Borough Manager's Report were all accepted by Motion of Jill Nickerson; Second Henry Bartlett. All in favor.

Mayor: Arbon Cemetery: The Cemetery grounds seem to be saturated with water. Would it be feasible to have Scott Bray, our Engineer, look at the property to see if drainage can be done through a diversion ditch or other way to divert the water. If Mr. Bray can come up with a plan, we can begin working to get the water diverted. Borough Manager said he would talk with Mr. Bray and have him look at the Cemetery.

Declaration of Disaster: The Pandemic has put the Country into an unprecedented situation. Through Tioga County and the State, by declaring a disaster emergency, we open the possibility for reimbursement for some of the expenses that we, as a Borough, are or may incur. Motion by Tonya McNamara, Second by Tim Martin to declare a Disaster for our Community. All in Favor.

Declaration of No 2020 Real Estate Tax Penalty Phase; In conjunction with the Declaration of Disaster, the County has suggested that the County as well as the municipalities in the County declare a "no penalty phase" for 2020 real estate taxes. Instead, the face amount would be due through December 31, 2020 rather than adding the 10% penalty costs. Motion by Jill Nickerson, Second by Tonya McNamara to declare a "no penalty phase" for 2020 real estate taxes. All in Favor.

Island Park Swimming Pool: Mayor Nickerson has had many discussions with other Managers and Principals in the County and as of right now, there isn't enough guidance regarding the opening of a community swimming pool to set a time when/if the pool will be open. In the Yellow Phase, we are not able to open the pool. If/when we go to the Green Phase, we will be in a position to open the pool. Borough Manager

said that he can have the pool ready for opening within a few days. A contractor is currently making the necessary repairs to the pool in order to open, even if it is as late as August 1. The issue may be in finding certified lifeguards.

Guest, Misty Jo Osborne commented that many of the lifeguards from 2019 were not happy with the number of hours they were getting and said it wasn't worthwhile for them to work only a few hours a week.

Mayor asked if Council would approve Firehouse Subs food truck setting up in the Plaza the week of May 26th. This group donates 10% of their proceeds from the sale of subs to the Fire Department. Motion by Jill Nickerson, Second by Henry Bartlett to allow the food truck to set up in the plaza parking lot. All in Favor. The Police Department will set up cones and spacing for people waiting in line for subs.

The Mayors of Blossburg, Mansfield and Liberty will be signing Proclamations for each of the graduating Seniors from each of the two (2) Southern Tioga School District high schools. This is in recognition of the accomplishment in light of the COVID Pandemic. Jill Nickerson is purchasing the certificates and covers. Will Council reimburse her for the supplies? Motion by Henry Bartlett, Second Tim Martin to reimburse Jill Nickerson for the Proclamation supplies. All in Favor

Yellow Pandemic Phase: Moving into the Yellow Phase has allowed some businesses to open up, however, is it important to continue to do what we have been doing with social distancing and wearing masks in order to avoid going back to the Red Phase. There is no timeframe for going from Yellow to Green. As of today, there were 16 positive tests in Tioga County. Those positive tests are the to-date cases. Many of those individuals have now been cleared. There are only 2 to 3 active cases at this time. HOWEVER, if there is a significant spike in cases during the Yellow Phase, we will be back to Red immediately.

It is imperative that we, as Borough leaders, continue to wear our masks and practice social distancing. It is also imperative that the Borough employees adhere to the same practices. The County Task Force is "scolding" those municipalities that are not following protocol.

Councilman Jerome Ogden asked if in Yellow can restaurants be opened for service in their building. The answer is still no. Take out only. It was suggested that picnic tables be set up near the plaza and properly distanced to encourage people to get takeout. Additionally, tables will be set up near Momma's Restaurant for their use.

Police: Nothing at this time.

Police No Meeting
Committee:

Borough Manager: The Municipal Authority needs a new Excavator as our existing unit is over 30 years old. The Municipal Authority said that they would purchase the Excavator and then lease it to the Borough on an as needed basis. Current cost of an excavator is approximately \$180,000. To lease an excavator right now costs \$4,500 per month. Also, the Borough will need a new loader in the next few years which would be another cost. Motion by Jerome Ogden, Second Tim Martin to lease the excavator from the Municipal Authority as needed. All in Favor. Mr. Ogden asked that Attorney Barrett prepare an agreement regarding the leasing arrangement, so that future Council and Authority members have some guidance regarding the use.

**Junior Council
Person:** Not Present.

**Committee Business
Development VIBE:** No Meeting.

**Planning
Commission Report:** Planning Commission meeting was held April 13, 2020 via telephone conference to discuss Ordinance regarding first floor apartments in C-1 zone. It is their recommendation we pass the Ordinance. A public hearing will be held when possible.

**Zoning Hearing
Board:** Nothing.

**Properties Sold
During Month:** 1 property sold in April..

Recreation: The Rec. Board meeting was cancelled.

- At this time the picnic tables being stored in the large pavilion will remain in the pavilion to deter people from gathering in it.
- In the Yellow Phase, the athletic fields, basketball and tennis courts and the skate park can be opened as long as protocol is followed. A general discussion was held regarding how to best block off the playground equipment. Jeff Osborne suggested using snow fence. Police Chief and Mayor as well as Council thought this was a great idea and will pursue this matter. Jill Nickerson is going to order some signage for the playground area as well.

Playground: Work on installing new swing set with start soon.

Tennis Court: Nothing

River Walk: Mr. Ogden said there were a couple of trees that needed to come down and a few dips that needed to be filled in. He said he would take a can of spray paint and mark what needs fixing.

Fire: Minutes were received and distributed. The Ambulance Association did very well with their membership drive and raised approximately \$24,000 in memberships and an additional \$5,000 in donations. All of their bills are current.

Library: The Library staff has started cleaning and setting up the Library in preparation of opening when the go ahead is received from the Commonwealth.

Street Committee: Received a quote for the tar & chipping for 2020. The total cost is approximately \$69,375, with \$56,000 being paid from liquid fuels, \$9,000 from the general fund and \$4,000 reimbursed from NTSWA for the portion of White Street adjacent to the Cemetery. Motion by Jerome Ogden, Second Tonya McNamara to proceed with the tar and chipping of the roads. All in Favor.

There is a manhole cover near the intersection of Granger and Hannibal that needs to have some cold patch put around it. Borough Manager will look into this.

**Shade Tree
Commission:** Nothing

Budget: Nothing

**Blossburg Municipal
Report:** Crew is currently working on preparing the Taylor Run area for the Water Tank construction and installation of the new water line.

OLD BUSINESS:

**Annual Financial
Statements:** Done.

Ordinance: A public meeting will be held once the Pandemic phase allows it.

**Sesquicentennial
Planning:** Currently on hold due to the COVID-19 Virus.

**Repeal of Mechanical
Device Tax:** Solicitor is reviewing.

COVID – 19: Blossburg Together and the Food Pantry would like to thank the Borough Crew and Bob Metarko for all of their help with the Food Pantries. The utilization of the forklift to move the pallets and food supplies is a life saver. Blossburg Together made “Preparation for Opening Buckets” for businesses that were allowed to open in the Yellow phase. The buckets contained cleaning supplies, face masks and shields and informational handouts for the business owners.

The Food Pantry on May 8th was another success with over 300 families being provided with food and supplies. To date Blossburg Together was received over \$13,000 in donations!

There will be a sign posted for local 6th grade graduates, another “special group” that will not be able to celebrate a milestone as planned.

Taylor St. Property: Police Chief has sent a citation to the property owner.

NEW BUSINESS: _____

CSR Upgrades: Our Computer Group has suggested that we upgrade several items in the next quarter. The two (2) items most critical are a new 48 port switch to replace our existing switches and a wireless replacement for the police department. The two items will run approximately \$3,000 - \$4,000. Motion by Jill Nickerson, Second Henry Bartlett to move forward. All in Favor.

Announcements: None at this time.

Adjournment: President Jolene Hall adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Motion by Jill Nickerson, Second by Tonya McNamara.

Attorney Barrett called an executive session for possible litigation at 7:28 p.m. Executive Session was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

/s/ Cheryl L. Bubacz

Cheryl L. Bubacz, Borough Secretary